

**THE  
ENGLISHWOMAN'S  
REVIEW OF SOCIAL  
AND INDUSTRIAL  
QUESTIONS**

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1891

Advisory Editors  
Janet Horowitz Murray  
and Myra Stark

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Volume 24

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JANET HOROWITZ MURRAY AND  
MYRA STARK

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1891



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THE  
ENGLISHWOMAN'S REVIEW  
OF  
Social and Industrial Questions.

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EDITED BY HELEN BLACKBURN.

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"S'il y a une question au monde dans laquelle il soit nécessaire de voir clair et de ne pas se payer de mots, c'est celle-ci ; c'est une question de vie ou de mort." ('L'Ouvrière.' By Jules Simon. Page ix.)

"A certain man hath said, 'Withstand the beginning ; after remedies come too late.'" (Thomas à Kempis, Lib i. cap 13.)

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No. CCVIII.—JANUARY 15TH, 1891.

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ART. I.—INFANT LIFE PROTECTION.

THERE are at the present time three Bills before Parliament materially affecting the welfare of infants, and tending to promote their chance of life,—two brought into the House of Lords, and the third into the House of Commons. The Lords are considering the Bishop of Peterborough's Bill concerning Infant Life Insurance, and Lord Meath's Bill to give legal control to persons wishing to adopt children as their own under certain conditions. The Commons have before them the question of amending the Infant Life Protection Act of 1872, which, although a measure that has produced incalculable good, is found to need amendment, in order to render it even more stringent on some points, if that can be done without at the same time causing hardship in the case of well-intentioned parents endeavouring to provide efficient care for their children during a temporary absence in search of work.

With this purpose in view, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee; and the evidence which was thus adduced clearly points to certain facts.

First, that infants have the greatest chance of life

for obvious reasons when in the care of their own mothers who are women of good repute. Second, that those upon whose birth no stigma rests, have, so to speak, the next best chance, for the services of both skilled and well conducted women can be obtained to take charge of them. Lastly, that the infants who have the least chance of life are the offspring of single or criminal women, whose existence drains the mother's resources, or prevents her from seeking to regain the standing she has lost in the social scale. The frail life can be so easily extinguished by a little *neglect* ("not murder," we are told), and when extinguished gives such immediate relief to the pressure upon the mother that, though we deplore, we cannot wonder that the mortality is very high among children of this class. There is also a further reason, namely, that many such mothers as those whose character I have described, are not able to obtain, from various reasons, the services of women of good conduct to take charge of their children; but must resort to the keeper of a baby farm. Now the baby-farmer derives her living from her occupation; the regularity of payment to her is notoriously uncertain; and her powers of exacting it are extremely inadequate. Thus the custom has grown up of demanding a "lump sum" when the charge of the infant is undertaken, "and no further questions asked." It can be readily seen how this practice affords opportunity for terrible abuse, as the death of the infant not only relieves the parents from the fear of further demand or of exposure, but also results in immediate profit to the "baby-farmer." To her, therefore, the inevitable increase of disease incident to the aggregation of infants in greater number than the limits of the human family, is an advantage. *They are more likely to die.* About twelve years ago I had occasion to take, very carefully, the percentage of deaths occurring among the children in the nursery wards of one of our large town work-houses. I do not think there was intentional neglect, nor even want of care among those in charge, yet, by the official statement of the Board of Guardians, the deaths per annum were shown to be in the proportion

of nearly 75 per 100 of the average number of inmates; that is, if I recollect aright, 53 deaths occurred within the year among an average number of 72 children under two years of age inhabiting those wards.

It is obvious that legislation for the Protection of Infant Life is not required for such as can be placed by their parents (unable themselves to retain the charge) in the hands of persons of good repute;—more especially if the children do not outnumber the ordinary limits of a family; also if the parents make, as they usually do, continuous payments for them; and, lastly, if they watch over them.

But for the children “who are not wanted in the world;” (about whom the usual phrase among the poor is “it is good the Lord has taken it”) no legislation can be too stringent; and no efforts should be spared to make, if possible, the charge of such children an *honourable* occupation to *be sought for* by persons of good life and conduct. That, I venture to hope, is possible by making them “boarded out” instead of “farmed out babies,” under the care of Voluntary Committees, placing them generally singly—or at most in couples—with persons of good character, whose means of support are independent of this charge. The Committee should register itself under the Act, report regularly to the “local bodies” charged with its administration, while a member of the Committee should accompany the Local Inspector in his visits to the homes where the children are placed.

My views may be looked upon as chimerical. But as my own Boarding Out Committee—formed for the purpose of taking care of pauper children (of whom we have had the charge of 464), have also had the care of eleven non-pauper children under two years of age—two of whom are now under twelve months old—and as yet have not lost one of these little creatures by death, I do not look upon my project as impractical though I recognise it as difficult of execution.

The working classes detest the reputation of being “baby farmers,” so the difficulty of finding suitable homes vanishes when that stigma is removed, as I think our Committee, after having found homes for

about 500 children, can testify. There would also be little difficulty in keeping down excessive mortality, for, although out of the eleven children under two years of age whom we have received, two at four months old were constitutionally diseased, and one at the same age had been drugged with laudanum to such a degree that he was in a most precarious condition, we have, as I said before, not yet lost a baby. The difficulty exists in securing continuous payment, which is a great safeguard for the children. But I trust even that is not insuperable, for a mother seventeen years old, began, and continued for seven years regular payments, until in fact the foster family adopted the child whom they had cherished so long; and we have received now for some time continuous payments for three others from their mothers, while we have also received such payments from friends of other mothers, hoping thus to reclaim them.

Lastly, what is the effect upon these mothers of the contact with and the friendly assistance rendered to them by women of pure life? The mother of seventeen, from being a most unruly and wayward girl—the result of a bad home—is now, ten years after the birth of her child, still in the same situation, a faithful and honoured servant, who has rendered to her mistress in her own great trial devoted service and friendship, in return for the motherly protection and care extended to her years ago!

JOANNA M. HILL.

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## ART. II.—THE ROOF OF FRANCE.

BY M. B. BETHAM EDWARDS.

MISS BETHAM EDWARDS is a very pleasant writer of travels. She goes to out-of-the-way places and gives vivid descriptions of what she sees and hears. Having heard of a certain wild part of France called "Les Causses" she made a pilgrimage in search of it, and after some difficulty succeeded in finding it.

It lies in the neighbourhood of Nimes, that is to say, one or two days' journey distant by carriage, approached by terribly steep roads in the midst of the most picturesque scenery. The people are very primitive, but honest and kind, and, strange to say, the accommodation at the little country inns is fairly good. But we think that Miss Betham Edwards is too partial towards France. She sees everything there through rose-coloured spectacles, and when she makes comparisons with England she is unfair towards the latter country. As an example we quote the following passage in speaking of silk mills: "The hours in these factories are terribly long—fifteen—two of which are, however, allowed for meals. The wages, on the other hand, contrast favourably with those of many of our own factories in which women are chiefly employed. About fifteen pence a day is the average pay, the *ateliers* being always closed on Sundays."

We think that here Miss Betham Edwards must be comparing in her own mind the French factory wages with the wages of English ready-made clothes makers. The miserable victims of the sweating system in London work even more hours than do these poor French women, and are even worse paid, but in factories the comparison is all in favour of England. At Manchester, in the cotton factories, the actual hours of work are only ten instead of thirteen, and the wages are nine shillings a week instead of seven-and-sixpence. It is fair to compare the cotton factories of England with the silk factories of France. We believe that if every class in England be compared with the same class or the equivalent class in France, that the advantage will be found on the side of England. Compare the following description given by Miss Edwards of a French farm, the master of which owned one hundred and twenty cows, and occupied nearly one thousand acres, with an English farm house in like circumstances: "I glanced round the kitchen. The floor certainly was of uncarpeted stone and uneven, but the place was clean and tidy, and everything was in order. Against the walls were rows of well-scoured cooking vessels, also shelves of china, and a few pictures for

further adornment. True, the curtained bedstead of master and mistress stood in one corner, but leading out of the kitchen was a second room for the son and the son's wife, whilst the women servants occupied in the dairy slept upstairs. It may be mentioned that the habit of sleeping in the kitchen arises from the excessive cold. I found on lately revisiting Anjou and in the Berri that the better-off peasants are building houses with upper bedrooms. '*C'est plus propre,*' said a Berrichon to me. The custom, therefore, of turning the kitchen into a bedroom may be considered on the wane."

An English farmer who owned twenty cows (omitting the hundred) would live more comfortably, and would have an upstairs bedroom with a fireplace to guard against excessive cold. An English farmer with a hundred and twenty cows would have two or three such bedrooms and a smart carpeted sitting room, besides the kitchen.

It is difficult to compare English and French labourers, because almost all French labourers have small farms, or even small freeholds consisting of a house and four or five acres of land, on which they partly depend. In England these men, partly labourers, partly farmers, are rare and are becoming more rare every year; but the actual English labourer, with his mere daily wage, will, we believe, sustain comparison with the French half-and-half labourer.

English labourers frequently rear families of five, six, seven, eight, or even ten children. The children, as children, may be seen to be fat and rosy, and will grow up strong and healthy. The average death rate in England is seventeen per hundred for infants under a year old; in country districts it is rather less. In France the average death of infants under a year is fifty per hundred, *i.e.*, one half of those born die in the first year of their lives, and the subsequent death rate is so high that the French population remains stationary. Among the upper classes in France but few children are born, but among the working classes this is not the case. Both among the manufacturing population and in the country there are many births

but few children are reared. M. Jules Simon says in *L'Ouvrière* (page 139): "Les naissances sont nombreuses quoique le chiffre de la population soit stationnaire."

This extraordinary mortality among young children is caused by the custom of putting the children out to nurse. In the country the labourer goes out to his daily labour for hire if his holding or freehold is too small to maintain his family, and his wife looks after the farm. She tills the land, reaps the crops, chops the firewood and carries it on her head to the house, milks the cows, and sees to the chickens, but as she cannot do all this and look after little children also, she puts them out to nurse, giving an old woman so much a week to feed and look after them. Even the smallest babies are put out in this way, and all but a few succumb to the treatment they receive. The question naturally arises why the French should follow such a barbarous custom. There are two answers to the question. First, poverty: the wages earned by the labourer are so low and the profits of the farm so small that he cannot afford to hire either a maid to look after the children, or a woman to do the farm work while the wife attends to the children, therefore it is necessary to put them out, and the old woman, who makes a trade of taking in children, is not always as careful and attentive as she ought to be, thus the larger part of the children die. The other answer to the question is given by persons who take an unfavourable view of French character. It is asserted that the father is often unwilling to divide or sell his little freehold, and as all property must be equally divided among his children, he arranges with the nurse that only two children shall survive—one to inherit the land, the other to take the money saved. This is a shocking view, and we will suppose the first to be the true answer, but that is sad enough. We fancy that an English labourer with his rosy family round him is happier in his hired cottage than the French peasant in his desolate freehold.

Miss Betham Edwards is absolutely truthful; her theories may not be correct, but every word of her



descriptions, everything which she relates as having herself seen or heard bears upon it the impress of perfect truth. Next time she goes to France we hope she will deal with Population Tables, and inquire of her peasant friends into the size of their families and the number of their children who have become *Petits Anges*.\*

J. B.

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### ART. III.—GENERAL BOOTH'S SCHEME.

EVERY one is by this time familiar with the gigantic scheme for the utilization of waste—waste human life and waste products of all sorts—presented to the public by General Booth “In Darkest England and the Way Out.”

The scheme is marked by a great virtue and a great defect, and the question of its value seems to resolve itself primarily into the consideration how far will the virtue carry it on despite the defect, how far will the defect nullify the virtue?

Thanks, in part to the tone of earnest sincerity with which it is marked, in part to the wide range of works co-ordinated into an apparently homogeneous whole, the book has captivated the imagination of the public to a remarkable degree. Something, too, is due to the racy style, which lends a vividness to the dismal tale of the “submerged tenth,” and to the absence of dry figures which are deterrent to the general reader,

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\* *The Droit des Femmes* (Dec. 21st.) states:—“That the young lady doctor, Miss Blanche Edwards, has communicated an important paper to the Anthropological Society on the causes of depopulation. Like her *confrères* of the male sex Miss Edwards is convinced that it is not the number of births that diminishes, but the mortality amongst infants which increases, and that this results from alcoholism and diseases transmitted by their parents.”

howsoever attractive to the legislator and the practical philanthropist.

From the outset the reader feels the point of difference between the Salvation Army methods and the methods of the Poor Law, whose function is to deal with the same mass of "out of works" and other miserable, homeless beings. General Booth and Mrs. Booth, to whose inspiration, we understand, much of the present and prospective organisation of the Salvation Army is due (and to whom as his "companion, counsellor and comrade," during forty years of work the book is dedicated), both have acted upon a fundamental fact of human nature, which reformers and philanthropists are too apt to overlook, viz., that every human being, in so far as he is worthy to be called a human being, desires to have some control over his surroundings. When the casual or the "out of work" goes to the Poor Law he is put, as it were, in the grip of a machine; when he goes to the Salvation Army he is met with a certain interest in his own individuality. Personal friendliness is the most salient feature in the Army; the discipline of having to work for his four-pennyworth of food and shelter comes in as an adjunct; he finds himself a recognised unit amongst the rest. Whereas in the workhouse or casual ward discipline is the prevalent fact, personal friendship depends wholly on the chance of meeting with sympathetic interest from one of the authorities. So the wanderer detests the workhouse and takes kindly to the Salvation Army, which, amidst much that is repellent to cultured methods, recognises that to—

"Plant a poet's word even, deep enough  
In any man's breast, looking presently  
For offshoots, you have done more for the man,  
'Than if you dressed him in a broadcloth coat,  
And warmed his potage at your Sunday fire."

The poet's word penetrates with difficulty through the channels of legally-devised systems, but it comes, or appears to come, readily through the "free and easy" and the "rousing" hymns of the Salvationists; so they attract many, and many a life sinking in to despair eagerly becomes one with the kindly band.

The recognition of the human need to be a unit with some individual friendliness, some degree of control over his surroundings, is the first virtue which shines out as we read the opening chapters of General Booth's book, depicting the mass of misery in the over-populated centres to which waste humanity gravitates. Next we read of plans for sweeping together all the refuse products, and turning them to account for the refuse lives, and here a way seems to open to immediate practical action, providing employment wherewith to sustain, test, and sift the chaotic multitude. But as we read on of one scheme after another, all to be concentrated round one central pivot, not only shelters, with its scavenging organisation and the attendant factories for toys, boots, paper mills, &c., where the refuse is to be transformed back to service; but the farm colony, which is to be self-sufficient in all its trades and all its needs, and the over sea colony, with Salvation emigrant ships; and then, clustering round all these, agencies for lending money, for settling points of law, for marriages—a complete organisation for the “regimentation” under the Salvation Army of the entire lives of a mighty multitude, made up largely of the most incapable of the community. The question forces itself, What sanction is there behind this mass of difficult human material? Nothing but implicit obedience, so General Booth tells us, and telling us this virtually goes athwart that very fact of human nature which in the first instance he had seemed to fully recognise. To put the scheme in another form, men and women are drawn to the Salvation Army by being made to feel themselves units of society once more, and by becoming inspired with hope that they can recover in some degree mastery over their circumstances. To this end they come and unite themselves with a band of workers, with more or less sense of *esprit de corps*, and presently find themselves under an autocratic rule.

But “people like to be governed”—General Booth says this is his experience. No doubt, people do like to be governed when they don't know how to guide themselves; weak wills rejoice to find a stronger will

on which they may lean and make part of his strength their own, so long as he guides; but the more successfully General Booth, or any other worker rescues human wills from shipwreck, the less will those rescued wills follow guidance when it becomes compulsion of one individual will over another. Religious enthusiasm such as General Booth looks to has never counteracted this tendency without a much stronger sanction than any private individual can exercise under a constitutional government.

We have not referred to the financial complexities of the scheme, this can best be dealt with by those who have experience in large financial undertakings—nor have we referred to the off-hand use of figures, wherein this book differs from any authoritative economic writings which we have met with hitherto. We prefer to take the scheme as it is presented, and point to the psychological difficulty which threatens defeat to any attempt to hold together so vast a regimentation of men and enterprises as is set forth in “Darkest England.” Those same facts of human nature which have built up the Salvation Army, will probably enable its leader to carry out much of his initial programme if he abandons his excessive centralization, and ceases to ignore utterly all other agencies already occupying similar ground.

We began the book with high hope, we lay it down more convinced than ever, that in social, as in other ailments, heroic remedies are a mistake, and that there is deep truth in the old adage—“The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small.”

Perhaps the most permanent good which the Salvation Army will effect for mankind will prove to be its recognition of the “mothering” element in all social reform, and for that it may be excused many extravagances.

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## ART. IV.—CARMEN SILVA.

THE Queen of Roumania, who paid a welcome visit to this country last year, occupies a unique position in her generation. Queen of the youngest of kingdoms, she alone among the crowned heads of Europe—almost alone amongst women occupying an exalted social position—has won a distinct place in literature, and has impressed her intellectual personality upon our generation. Her life has been translated from the German of Baroness Stackelberg, and all Englishwomen have now the opportunity of studying the singularly fascinating character and versatile genius of one of the most talented living women. Carmen Silva, *née* Princess Elizabeth of Wied in 1843, is a striking example of hereditary talent transmitted through a long line of more than ordinarily gifted and earnest men and women, who achieved intellectual pre-eminence in dark periods of war and revolution. From Hermann von Wied, Archbishop of Köln, and friend of Luther—who resigned his office at the Reformation—to Prince Hermann, father of the Queen of Roumania, there were few of the successive heads of the family who did not evince strong intellectual individuality; while Marie Louise, wife of the second Prince, would have been a great woman in any age.

Many direct and indirect influences must, however, combine in the formation of a noble character, and Carmen Silva, like many other women who will leave their “footprints on the sands of time,” owes much to early training and home life. Princess Marie quickly recognized in her only daughter great talent and the seeds of a fine disposition, joined to a strangely restless and excitable nature. Strictly conscientious, and uniting sound judgment to a loving and sympathetic nature, the mother brought many gifts to her aid in the mental and moral training of her child. She set before her the example of a life ruled in accordance with a high ideal, and impressed upon her always that love, duty, and labour are the truest aims of womanhood.

Sorrow entered early into the life of the young prin-

cess, and played a great part in the development of her character. The brother to whom she was devotedly attached dragged out a suffering life for many years, then died. Her father's last illness also was long and painful. The loss of friends and relations occurred so constantly that she sadly writes—"I expect sorrow and many tears; each year demands its sacrifice." The clouds that hung so darkly over her young life might well have destroyed its spring, but they served only to teach self-restraint, to create sympathy for others, and to draw out the sweet power of loving. "'Tis all men's office to speak patience to those that wring under the load of sorrow," says the great poet, and in childhood the princess learned this lesson. Sorrow also drew her into an ever more working life, in which she sought to find temporary forgetfulness. Thus were trials richly blessed to her, for the restlessness and impetuosity of her nature, which might have marred her career, became aids to the development of her genius. So may the floods of the swollen river deal destruction or give life, according to the course which they are allowed to run.

English, in which most of her studies were carried on, appears to have been a favourite language with the Princess; but a great gift of memory enabled her rapidly to master Latin, French and Italian, so that the classics of many countries spread their wealth before her eager mind. Music and painting long remained uncertain pleasures; the former often proved so exciting as to bring quick reaction, the latter failed to satisfy. At a later period of her life, Queen Elizabeth excelled in both arts, and found real happiness in them. Carmen Silva is one of nature's poets, and if the work she has produced may appear not to justify the full promise of her youth, the diversity of her interests and the many demands upon her time supply the explanation. Love and understanding of the world of nature are inseparable from the poetic temperament, and the effect of unrestricted communion with Nature at an impressionable age can hardly be over-estimated. When Nature's moods can be closely interwoven with the joys and sorrows of life, mingling with the dreams

and fancies of youth, the influence is one which endures. The associations which surrounded Monrépos, the early home of Princess Elizabeth, were singularly calculated to inspire her imagination. The country had been—has been since—the battle-field and grave of thousands of her nation. Poets have sung the heroic deeds of the sons of Germany by the vine-clad slopes of the classic Rhine; folk-lore and rich legend have peopled its waters and forests with spirits. Amidst such surroundings the Princess grew up a “child of nature.” There, for herself alone, she wrote what nature taught her.

“So lived I in spirit,  
Lonely my own hidden life, by none to be known of,  
Never a sound or cloud picture but brought to my fancy  
Matter for thought without end and a keen-edged emotion.”

Goethe has said—“In stillness talent forms itself character in the great current of the world.”

At the age of seventeen Princess Elizabeth left the “stillness” and pushed her bark into the world’s current, going alone to visit the Queen of Prussia at Berlin, where she first met her future husband, and was brought into contact with many of the great thinkers of the time. Long months were subsequently passed at Monrépos, witnessing the sufferings of her brother Otto. “It is well,” she writes, “to learn first the serious side of life; now we do not long for or expect anything of it”—sad words from the pen of a girl of twenty. Possessed by a craving for work, and taking as her watchwords love, duty and labour, she devoted herself to teaching, literature and art.

In the following years Princess Elizabeth travelled much in Europe under the care of the Grand Duchess Helène, and whilst at St. Petersburg heard of the death of her father, whose constant companion she had been for many years, and to whom she owed much of her mental training. During this winter spent in the northern capital she worked steadily, studying music under Rubenstein and Clara Schumann, reading Shakespeare, and learning Russian. The year after she visited Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, and various

places in Germany, studying the language and literature of each country, and meeting many distinguished people, among whom were Von Moltke, Tolstoi, Rouher, Gervinus, and Helmholz. Though constantly travelling at this period, she was able to complete a translation from Carlyle, a life of her brother, and a collection of prayers. In 1869, the Princess of Wied and her daughter visited the Prince of Hohenzollern, father of Prince Charles of Roumania, to whom a few months later Princess Elizabeth was betrothed. It was, perhaps, consistent with her impulsive character that the decision on which depended all her future life should quickly be taken. She had watched Prince Charles' career, first as soldier and then as organiser of a new state, with romantic interest, and her imagination was fired by the prospect of aiding in the great work of building up a nation. On the 12th November, 1869, her new life began. The Roumanians gave the Princess an enthusiastic welcome, and her artistic temperament was deeply touched by her reception, which, commencing at Altorsova on the Austrian frontier, reached its climax at Bucharest. Inspired by a noble conception of the responsibilities of her high position, she determined to realise the ideal which the Prince on his betrothal had placed before her, "The whole nation has a right to you." "Every human being is in need of sympathy," she writes, and with this magic key she found her way into the hearts of her people, by whom during twenty years she has been looked up to as a "mother." Her standard of a sovereign's duty may be best gathered from her own words written in 1873:—"I am beginning to grow to my ideal, which is to become the confidential adviser of the Roumanian state, house, and family;" and in a poem later she has well expressed her meaning:—

"Thou must behold with a gaze undaunted,  
The dark abyss that no mists conceal,  
Thy head upraised, thy foot firmly planted,  
Thy hand aye open to help and heal.  
All thoughts of self must be banished ever,  
Thy people's life must thy own life be,  
The voice of passion, ah! heed it never,  
'Thou mayst lead millions to rise with thee."



As a girl Princess Elizabeth had served an apprenticeship to sorrow, but her married life brought one more crushing trial in the death of her only child, when four years old. She had lavished on her one treasure all the wealth of love of which she was capable, and this bitter affliction left an ineffaceable mark on her life. Again in labour of all kinds she sought and found the best relief. Working feverishly and unrestingly herself, she inspired those around her to assist in carrying out many schemes for the improvement of the condition of her people.

It is difficult to imagine a European country in this century without any literature, yet such was the case of Roumania twenty years ago. With the facility of a born linguist the Princess learned the national language, and soon after her marriage founded a society for the publication of books suitable for schools and the people, translating them from the French with the help of the poet Alexandri. This society was the first of many since established with various objects. Some are charitable institutions, of which the country stood much in need; others are directed for the encouragement of native industries. The initiation and personal superintendence of these societies entailed enormous industry and much practical work; but in the summer home of Sinaia, amongst the Carpathian Mountains, literature and art could still be cherished. There too, however, work seems to have been ceaseless; to the temperament of Carmen Silva rest was impossible. The natural poetical talent, which, when repressed, was almost a burden to her, found an opportunity for development during the quieter years which preceded the war. Soon after her great sorrow, she began under Kotzebue to study the "Art of Poetry," and quickly turned this new knowledge to account by translating into Roumanian some of the treasures of German literature, thus, to quote her own words, striving "To be a voice which clothes the truth in acceptable forms and takes all harshness from it."

But the arts of peace were to be laid aside in presence of the dire necessities of war. Roumanian independence could only be accomplished on the field of